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Indiana Department of Labor
Bureau of Child Labor

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Education First Program to Help Working Teens

Indianapolis, IN – For many teens finding an employer who will help them balance the challenging demands of school and work can be a task. That's why the Bureau of Child Labor and the Restaurant & Hospitality Association of Indiana (RHA) have developed a partnership to help teens keep Education First. Education First is a program that places grades and attendance in school as the priority for working teenagers.

Under the Education First program, RHA members pledge to coordinate teen's schedules to accommodate their academic needs; to only work teens within the hours allowed by law; and to make sure that the work environment is safe and healthy.

According to Pete Rimsans, deputy commissioner of the Indiana Department of Labor and director of the Bureau of Child Labor, 52% of all teen workers in Indiana are employed in the restaurant industry. "This is a perfect partnership and a major step toward supporting our young people not only in the workplace but also with their academics." Rimsans said over 60,000 teenagers working in Indiana are employed by businesses in the restaurant industry.

John Livengood, president of RHA, said his members want teen workers, and their parents, to know that as an Education First employer, they will place education first for their teen workers. Livengood said "Education First" decals are posted in RHA participating member's windows identifying them as partners in this program and young people should look for these decals when looking for a job. The members have also pledged to work with parents and the school to ensure grades and attendance remain satisfactory.

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The Restaurant & Hospitality Association first developed the Education First Program ten years ago. In recognition of the RHA's leadership, the Bureau of Child Labor will be using its website to encourage teens and their parents to seek out employers who have taken this pledge to put education first.

All children between 14-17 years of age must obtain a work permit from the school he or she attends before they can begin work. IPS superintendent Dr. Pat Pritchett said Education First is a step forward in helping working students academically. "Studies indicate that when full-time students are on the job more than 20 hours a week their grades and attendance tend to decrease. With the largest employer of teens in the state helping us monitor the numbers of hours a student works helps our issuing officers immensely and will probably increase the graduation rate for some schools. We are committed to providing students with the finest education and if we find that a student's work schedule gets in the way of that education we will have no problem pulling the work permit," Dr. Pritchett said.

Last year over 113,000 work permits were issued by Indiana schools. Indiana is one of 15 states in the nation that requires teens ages 14 to 17 to obtain a permit to work. Indiana law allows each school district to set academic requirements for students obtaining a work permit.

For students or parents wanting to know if there are Education First employers in their local area, they should log onto www.teenwork.org/educationfirst and www.indianarestaurants.org for a complete list of participating members. You can also log onto www.teenworker.org for information regarding Indiana's Child Labor Laws. Or, call 1-888 TEEN WORK for additional information.

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This release is available on the Internet at <http://www.state.in.us/labor/childlabor/news.html>
